Rice University
Spring 2016

Sociology 363
African American-Jewish Relations:
Race, Religion, Politics, and Popular Culture

Tu/Th, 2:30-3:45 PM
Instructor: Dr. Joshua Furman
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 AM or by appt.
Rayzor Hall 322
Email: joshua.furman@rice.edu

This course examines African American-Jewish relations in the United States from colonial times to the present day. Through readings, music, images, and films, we will explore constructions of racial identity, arenas of religious and cultural interaction, and the politics and policies that have shaped African American-Jewish relations in urban neighborhoods. Encounters between these two minority groups, each with its own history of suffering and discrimination, have engendered considerable controversy and scholarly attention. One of the central issues at stake in this narrative is the question of whether a "natural alliance" between African Americans and Jewish Americans ever existed, and if it did, what caused it to fray and come apart in the final decades of the twentieth century. How and why do the experiences, achievements, and struggles of these two groups overlap and parallel, and how and why do they conflict and diverge?

We will attempt to answer these and other questions with the aid of primary source documents, films, music, memoirs, and works of history and ethnography. Among the topics we will explore are the roles of Jews as slave traders and slave owners before the Civil War, arenas of individual and institutional cooperation between African Americans and Jews, and instances when the history and culture of each group influenced and transformed the other.

Course Assignments and Grading Policies

- **Participation (10%):** Active, informed participation in class discussions
- **Weekly Response Papers (15%):** 1-paragraph (4-6 sentences) response papers, due each Tuesday or as instructed. Question will be distributed via e-mail no later than the preceding Friday. Lowest grade will be dropped.
- **Midterm Paper (20%):** 5-7 page paper on Black-Jewish relations before WWII **(due Thursday, February 11)**
- **Film Review (10%):** 2-3 page review of the film, *The Jazz Singer*, and its connections to course themes (**due Tuesday, February 23)**
- **Final Paper (30%):** 10-12 page paper, with citations and bibliography, analyzing a significant theme or question from the course.

- **Annotated Bibliography (10%):** Students will submit an annotated bibliography of their primary and secondary sources
- **Research Presentation (5%):** Students will present their findings and research process on the last day of class.

- Please allow at least 24 hours after receiving graded work to contact me about reviewing your grade.
- Extensions on major assignments will only be granted in cases of documented illness (i.e., a doctor's note) or family emergency, or on a case-by-case basis subject to my discretion. **Late assignments will receive a deduction penalty of 10 points per day.**

All assignments will be graded on the following letter/number scale:

A+ = 97-100	C+= 77-79	F= <60
A = 94-96	C = 74-76	
A- = 90-93	C- = 70-73	
B+ = 87-89	D+ = 67-69	
B = 84-86	D = 64-66	
B- = 80-83	D-= 60-63	

Required Texts

- Maurianne Adams and John Bracey, eds., *Strangers and Neighbors: Relations between Blacks and Jews in the United States* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).
- Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006).
- Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America* (New York: Picador, 2010)
- James McBride, *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother* (New York: Riverhead, 1996)

Course Schedule

Part I: Foundations

Tuesday, January 12: Introduction to the Course: Themes and Goals

Thursday, January 14: Definitions and Theory—What We Talk About When We Talk About Race and Ethnicity//Foundations in African American-Jewish Relations

- Chapter 1, "Defining the Subject," in Peter Kivisto and Paul R. Croll, *Race and Ethnicity: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-25 [OWL]
- Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 3-13 [OWL]
- Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*: *Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), 1-7

Tuesday, January 19: Jewishness, Blackness, Race, and the Body—Shifting Concepts

- W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," in *The Souls of Black Folk*
- Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Aschroft, et al. (1995; repr., New York: Routledge, 2002), 323-326
- Sander Gilman, "Are Jews White? Or, the History of the Nose Job," in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader,* eds. Les Back and John Solomos (New York: Routledge, 2000), 229-235
- Matthew F. Jacobson, "Looking Jewish, Seeing Jews," in *Theories of Race and Racism*, 238-252

Part II: From the Colonies to the Civil War

Thursday, January 21: Jewish Slave Traders and Slave Owners

- Seymour Drescher, "The Role of Jews in the Transatlantic Slave Trade," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 105-115
- Virginia Bever Platt, " 'And Don't Forget the Guinea Voyage': The Slave Trade of Aaron Lopez of Newport," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 116-130
- "Four Documents Concerning Jews and Slavery," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 137-141 (skip "Helping Elect Lincoln")
- Bertram W. Korn, "Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789-1865," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 147-182

Tuesday, January 26: Abolitionists and Apologists

- Jayme A. Sokolow, "Revolution and Reform: The Antebellum Jewish Abolitionists," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 183-197
- Bertram W. Korn, "The Rabbis and the Slavery Question," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 198-216
- Rabbis Raphall and Einhorn on Slavery, 1861 [OWL]
- Bernard Illowy, "Fast Day Sermon" [OWL]
- Rabbi Heilprin's response to Raphall: http://www.jewish-history.com/civilwar/heilprin.html

Thursday, January 28: Religious Intersections

- Yvonne Chireau, "Black Culture and Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism, 1790-1930, an Overview," in *Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 15-32 [OWL]
- Albert J. Raboteau, "African-Americans, Exodus, and the American Israel", in Strangers & Neighbors, 57-63
- "Go Down, Moses" and "An Ante-Bellum Sermon" (1895), in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 53-56

Part II: Closer Contacts, 1915-1945

Tuesday, February 2: Great Migrations and Elite Encounters

- Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters,* Ch.1
- Philip S. Foner, "Black-Jewish Relations in the Opening Years of the Twentieth Century," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 237-244
- Louis R. Harlan, "Booker T. Washington's Discovery of Jews," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 287-295
- David Levering Lewis, "Parallels and Divergences: Assimilationist Strategies of Afro-American and Jewish Elites from 1910 to the Early 1930s," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 331-351

Thursday, February 4: Perceptions of the Other

- Hasia R. Diner, "Between Words and Deeds: Jews and Blacks in America, 1880-1935," in *Struggles in the Promised Land: Toward a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States*, eds. Jack Salzman and Cornel West (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 87-106. [OWL]
- Louis Schmier, " 'For Him the 'Schwartzers' Couldn't Do Enough': A Jewish Peddler and His Black Customers Look at Each Other," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 223-236
- David J. Hellwig, "Black Images of Jews: From Reconstruction to Depression," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 300-315

Tuesday, February 9: Depression-era Activism

- Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, Ch.2
- Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke, "The Bronx Slave Market," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 369-374
- "J.L. LeFlore to Barney Strauss (1938)," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 378-379

Thursday, February 11: Midterm Papers Due

- **Assignment:** Midterm Papers due in class

Tuesday, February 16: Cultural Crossings and Controversy—Blackface and *The Jazz Singer*

- Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996), 45-49, 81-115 [OWL]
- Michael Alexander, *Jazz Age Jews* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 133-138, 167-179 [OWL]
- "Silver Swanee" and "Seven or Eleven," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 319-328
- Henry Ford, "Jewish Jazz—Moron Music—Becomes Our National Music," *Dearborn Independent*, August 1921 [OWL]

**Screening of *The Jazz Singer* (1927), time and place TBD

Thursday, February 18: World War II

- Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, Ch.3

- Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., "Black-Jewish Relations in Wartime Detroit," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 384-406
- Lunabelle Wedlock, "Comparisons by Negro Publications of the Plight of Jews in Germany with that of the Negro in America," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 427-443

Part III: The Fight for Civil Rights, 1945-1965

Tuesday, February 23: Institutional Cooperation and Disunity

- Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, Ch. 4
- "Large Jewish Organization in Controversy," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 520-521
- "Resolution Adopted by the Biennial Convention of the American Jewish Congress (1958)," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 560-563
- "Correspondence between Isaac Toubin and Roy Wilkins," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 564-565
- **Assignment***: Jazz Singer* film review due in class

Thursday, February 25: Freedom Riders

- Murray Friedman, *What Went Wrong?*, 177-193 [OWL]
- Debra L. Schultz, "Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement," in *American Jewish Women's History: A Reader*, ed. Pamela S. Nadell (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 281-296 [OWL]
- **In-class discussion of final paper assignment and possible topics**

Spring Break: No Class 3/1—3/3 **Begin reading Satter, *Family Properties*****

Tuesday, March 8: Rev. Dr. King, Rabbi Heschel, and Rabbi Prinz

- Susannah Heschel, "Theological Affinities in the Writings of Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King, Jr.", in *Black Zion*, 168-186 [OWL]
- Abraham J. Heschel, "What Happens to Them Happens to Me," in *Bridges and Boundaries,* 86-87 [OWL]
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "What Happens to Them Happens to Me," in *Bridges and Boundaries: African Americans and American Jews* (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1992), 88-90 [OWL]
- Rabbi Joachim Prinz, speech at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963

Thursday, March 10: Caught in the Crossfire—Southern Jews' Reactions

- Seth Forman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being Jewish," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 620-636
- Esther Levine, "Southern Jewish Views on Segregation," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 524-527
- P. Allen Krause, "Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South, 1954-1967," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 540-557
- **Students finalize final paper topic**

Part IV: Rising Tensions: Alienation, Exploitation, and Violence

Tuesday, March 15—Thursday, March 17: African Americans and Jews in the City

- Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America*
- John R. Logan, et al., "Emergent Ghettos: Black Neighborhoods in New York and Chicago, 1880-1940," *American Journal of Sociology* 120.4 (January 2015): 1055-1094

Tuesday, March 22: Political Flashpoints—Black Power, Zionism, and Feminism

- Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, Ch.6
- Waldo E. Martin, Jr., "'Nation Time!' Black Nationalism, The Third World, and Jews," in *Struggles in the Promised Land*, p.341-355 [OWL]
- Barbara Smith, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 765-780
- Letty Cottin Pogrebin, "Blacks, Jews, and Gender: The History, Politics, and Cultural Anthropology of a Women's Dialogue Group," in *Struggles in the Promised Land*, 385-400

Thursday, March 24: Jewish Racism, Black Anti-Semitism

- Norman Podhoretz, "My Negro Problem—and Ours," *Commentary* (1963) [OWL]
- Harold Cruse, "My Jewish Problem and Theirs," in *Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism*, Nat Hentoff, ed., (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 143-188 [OWL]
- James Baldwin, "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White," *New York Times Magazine*, April 9, 1967 [OWL]
- Robert Gordis, "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They Want a Scapegoat," *New York Times Magazine*, April 23, 1967 [OWL]
- Elise C. Rollock, "A Negro Speaks to Jews," in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 681-683

Tuesday, March 29—Annotated Bibliographies Due and a Guest Lecture on African American Jewry

- **Assignment:** Annotated Bibliographies Due in class

Thursday, March 31: No Class (Midterm Recess)

Tuesday, April 5: Conflict in Crown Heights, August 1991

- Excerpt from Henry Goldschmidt, *Race and Religion among the Chosen People of Crown Heights* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2006), 36-75 [OWL]
- Alexis Okeowo, "Crown Heights, Twenty Years After the Riots," *New Yorker*, August 19, 2011 [OWL]

Thursday, April 7: *Fires in the Mirror* (1993): In-class film screening and discussion

Tuesday, April 12: Lives in Black and White

- James McBride, *The Color of Water*, 1-103

Thursday, April 14: Lives in Black and White

- James McBride, *The Color of Water*, 105-end

Tuesday, April 19: "Black Lives Matter"—A New Civil Rights Movement?

- Julius Lester, "Blacks and Jews: Where Are We? Where Are We Going?" in *Strangers and Neighbors*, 813-822
- Rev. Dr. Jacqueline J. Lewis, "I am Black and Black Lives Matter," *Huffington Post*, July 13, 2015
- Rabbi Stephanie Kolin, "I am Jewish and Black Lives Matter," *Huffington Post*, July 17, 2015
- Rabbi Gil Steinlauf, editorial, *The Washington Post*, September 22, 2015
- Chava Shervington, editorial, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, July 16, 2015

Thursday, April 21: Final Class—Student Presentations

Final Papers Due TBD

TBD: Screening of documentary film "Rosenwald" with director Aviva Kempner as part of JCC Jewish Film Festival; private session with director for students